

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An emergency evacuation apparatus for use with an adjustable bed and for removing a bed-ridden person from the adjustable bed in an emergency situation, comprising a base tray having three transverse fold lines to allow the base tray to bend as four panels defining a backrest, an intermediate panel and a knee-break, the base tray being adapted for placement between the adjustable bed and a mattress supporting the bed-ridden person to stay on top of the adjustable bed and wherein the base tray is adapted to bend along the transverse fold lines when the profile of the adjustable bed is changed during normal use of the adjustable bed by the bed-ridden person; a mechanical locking means operable between an unlocked condition in which the base tray is able to bend along the transverse fold lines and a locked condition in which the base tray is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines and to provide the base tray with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person thereby allowing the base tray carrying the mattress and the bed-ridden person to be lifted off of the adjustable bed.
2. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the mechanical locking means comprises at least one rigid locking bolt.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an underside of the base tray is provided with wheels, glide members, roller balls or castors to facilitate its movement over the floor.
5. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 4,

wherein the wheels, glide members, roller balls or castors are fitted in channels on the underside of the base tray.

6. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising u-shaped runners fixed to the underside of the base tray into which the wheels, glide members, roller balls or castors are fitted.
7. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising straps secured to the base tray for wrapping around the person in an emergency situation to restrain the person.
8. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the straps are provided with snap-fit couplings which permit the straps to be connected together to encircle the person prior to tightening the straps.
9. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the base tray has two longitudinal folds lines defining a central panel for supporting the person and two side panels that can be bent out of the plane of the central panel by the straps.
10. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the base tray is made of polypropylene.
11. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the transverse and longitudinal fold lines are hydraulically pressed into the base tray.
12. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising carrying handles secured to sides of the base tray.

13. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising at least one strip of foam fixed to an underside of the base tray.

14. (Currently Amended) A combination of an adjustable bed having a plurality of panels that can bend relative to each other and an emergency evacuation apparatus for removing a bed-ridden person from the adjustable bed in an emergency situation, the emergency evacuation apparatus comprising a base tray having a plurality of transverse fold lines to allow the base tray to bend as a plurality of panels, in registration with the same number of the panels of the bed but below a mattress; and mechanical locking means operable between an unlocked condition in which the base tray is able to bend along the transverse fold lines in register with the underlying panels of the adjustable bed and a locked condition in which the base tray is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines and to provide the base tray with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.

15. (Previously Presented) The combination of the adjustable bed and the emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the base tray and the adjustable bed have the same number of panels.

16. (Previously Presented) The combination of the adjustable bed and the emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the base tray has substantially the same width as the adjustable bed.

17. (Previously Presented) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 6 in combination with the adjustable bed, wherein a tail-board of the adjustable bed includes rollers or fixed projections for engagement with the runners fixed to the underside of the base tray to assist in the removal of the emergency evacuation apparatus from the adjustable bed.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (New) A method of using an emergency evacuation apparatus with an adjustable bed having a plurality of panels that can bend relative to each other, comprising the steps of:

locating the emergency evacuation apparatus on top of the adjustable bed;

operating the adjustable bed with a mechanical locking means of the emergency evacuation apparatus in an unlocked position such that panels of a base tray of the emergency evacuation apparatus bend along transverse fold lines in register with underlying panels of the adjustable bed;

when a bed-ridden person is to be evacuated from the adjustable bed, bending the panels of the base tray of the emergency evacuation apparatus along the transverse fold lines in register with the underlying panels of the adjustable bed until the panels of the base tray lie in the same plane or at a predetermined angle to each other; and

operating the mechanical locking means from the unlocked position to the locked position so that the base tray is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines, thereby providing the base tray with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.

20. (New) The emergency evacuation apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising retractable wheels wherein in a first retracted configuration, no surface of the wheels extends beyond a horizontal plane of the base tray and in a second extended configuration, the surface of the wheels extends beyond the horizontal plane of the base tray.